

What is Claimed is:

1. An interactive program guide system including user equipment with which an interactive television program guide is provided and which includes a video recorder and a television, comprising:

5 means for receiving television program guide information for use in the interactive television program guide;

means for selecting a program for recording from the interactive television program
10 guide;

means for locking the selected program, wherein when the selected program is locked access to the selected program is blocked;

15 means for displaying a message when the selected program becomes locked to ask the user whether to retain the recording selection;

means for receiving a response from the user that indicates whether the user desires to retain the recording selection; and

20 means for unlocking the selected program and directing the video recorder to record the selected program when the response received from the user indicates that the user desires to retain the recording selection.

2. The interactive program guide system defined in claim 1 wherein the means for locking the selected program is performed by using blocking criteria.

3. The interactive program guide system defined in claim 2 wherein the blocking criteria is selected from the group consisting of program titles, ratings, channel numbers, time periods, content, and
5 any combination thereof.

4. A method for using an interactive program guide system using user equipment with which an interactive television program guide is provided and
5 which includes a video recorder and a television, comprising:

receiving television program guide information for use in the interactive television program guide;

10 selecting a program for recording from the interactive television program guide;

locking the selected program, wherein when the selected program becomes locked, access to the selected program is blocked;

15 displaying a message when the selected program becomes locked to ask the user whether to retain the recording selection;

receiving a response from the user that indicates whether the user desires to retain the
20 recording selection; and

unlocking the selected program and directing the video recorder to record the selected program when the response received from the user indicates that the user desires to retain the recording
25 selection.

5. The method defined in claim 4 wherein locking the selected program comprises allowing the user to set blocking criteria.

6. The method defined in claim 5 wherein the blocking criteria is selected from the group consisting of program titles, ratings, channel numbers, time periods, content, and any combination thereof.

7. An interactive program guide system including user equipment with which an interactive television program guide is provided and which includes a video recorder and a television, comprising:

5 communications circuitry configured to receive television program guide information for use in the interactive television program guide;

 display circuitry configured to display the interactive television program guide;

10 control circuitry configured to (1) provide a user with an opportunity to select a program for recording from the interactive television program guide, (2) provide the user with an opportunity to lock the selected program, wherein when the user locks the

15 selected program, access to the selected program is blocked, (3) direct the display circuitry to display a message when the selected program becomes locked to ask the user whether to retain the recording selection, (4) process a user response that indicates whether the user

20 desires to retain the recording selection, and (5) unlock the selected program and direct the video recorder to record the selected program when the response received from the user indicates that the user desires to retain the recording selection.

8. The interactive program guide system defined in claim 7 wherein the control circuitry provides the user with the opportunity to lock the selected program based on blocking criteria.

9. The interactive program guide system defined in claim 8 wherein the blocking criteria is selected from the group consisting of program titles, ratings, channel numbers, time periods, content, and
5 any combination thereof.

10. A machine-readable medium for implementing an interactive television program guide comprising machine program logic recorded thereon for:
receiving television program guide
5 information for use in an interactive television program guide;
providing a user with an opportunity to select a program for recording from the interactive television program guide;
10 locking the selected program, wherein when the selected program becomes locked, access to the selected program is blocked;
displaying a message when the selected program becomes locked to ask the user whether to
15 retain the recording selection;
receiving a response from the user that indicates whether the user desires to retain the recording selection; and
unlocking the selected program and
20 directing a video recorder to record the selected program when the response received from the user indicates that the user desires to retain the recording selection.

11. The machine-readable medium defined in claim 10 further comprising machine program logic recorded thereon for locking the selected program wherein the locking the selected program comprises
5 allowing the user to set blocking criteria.

12. The machine-readable medium defined in claim 11 further comprising machine program logic recorded thereon for allowing the user to set blocking criteria wherein the blocking criteria is selected from
5 the group consisting of program titles, ratings, channel numbers, time periods, content, and any combination thereof.

13. An interactive program guide system including user equipment with which an interactive television program guide is provided and which includes a video recorder and a television, comprising:

5 means for receiving television program guide information for use in the interactive television program guide;

means for selecting a program for recording from the interactive television program
10 guide;

means for determining whether a user is interested in locking programs;

means for displaying a message when the user is interested in locking programs and a program
15 has been selected for recording, asking the user whether to override program locks during the recording;

means for receiving a response from the user that indicates whether the user desires to override program locks during the recording; and

20 means for unlocking the selected program
if it is locked and directing the video recorder to
record the selected program when the response received
from the user indicates that the user desires to
override program locks during the recording.

14. The interactive program guide system
defined in claim 13 wherein the means for determining
whether a user is interested in locking programs
comprises means for determining whether a parental
5 control number has been created.

15. A method for using an interactive
program guide system using user equipment with which an
interactive television program guide is provided and
which includes a video recorder and a television,
5 comprising:

receiving television program guide
information for use in the interactive television
program guide;

10 selecting a program for recording from
the interactive television program guide;

determining whether a user is interested
in locking programs;

15 displaying a message when the user is
interested in locking programs and a program has been
selected for recording, asking the user whether to
override program locks during the recording;

receiving a response from the user that
indicates whether the user desires to override program
locks during the recording; and

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20 unlocking the selected program if it is
locked and directing the video recorder to record the
selected program when the response received from the
user indicates that the user desires to override
program locks during the recording.

16. The method defined in claim 15 wherein
the determining whether a user is interested in locking
programs comprises determining whether a parental
control number has been created.

17. An interactive program guide system
including user equipment with which an interactive
television program guide is provided and which includes
a video recorder and a television, comprising:

5 communications circuitry configured to
receive television program guide information for use in
the interactive television program guide;
 control circuitry configured to (1)
provide a user with an opportunity to select a program
10 for recording from the interactive television program
guide, (2) determine whether a user is interested in
locking programs, (3) direct display circuitry to
display a message when the user is interested in
locking programs and a program has been selected for
15 recording, asking the user whether to override program
locks during the recording, (4) process a user response
that indicates whether the user desires to override
program locks during the recording, and (5) unlock the
selected program if it is locked and direct a video
20 recorder to record the selected program when the
response from the user indicates that the user desires
to override program locks during the recording.

18. The interactive program guide system defined in claim 17 wherein the control circuitry determines whether a user is interested in locking programs by determining whether a parental control
5 number has been created.

19. A machine-readable medium for implementing an interactive television program guide comprising machine program logic recorded thereon for:
receiving television program guide
5 information for use in the interactive television program guide;

providing a user with an opportunity to select a program for recording from the interactive television program guide;
10 determining whether a user is interested in locking programs;

displaying a message when the user is interested in locking programs and a program has been selected for recording, asking the user whether to
15 override program locks during the recording;

receiving a response from the user that indicates whether the user desires to override program locks during the recording; and

unlocking the selected program if it is
20 locked and directing a video recorder to record the selected program when the response received from the user indicates that the user desires to override program locks during the recording.

20. The machine-readable medium defined in
claim 19 further comprising machine program logic
recorded thereon for determining whether a user is
interested in locking programs by determining whether a
5 parental control number has been created.